

Message Text

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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FOR CU/ART, CU/EE, EUR/SOV

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SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1. I CALLED ON MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION V.P. YELUTIN JANUARY 9, AFTER DELAYS CAUSED BY TRAVEL AND OTHER EVENTS, TO PRESENT LETTER FROM SECRETARY WEINBERGER AND REVIEW OUR CONTACTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION. YELUTIN IS A VIGOROUS, PERSONABLE, AND HUMOROUS MAN OF ENGINEER/PARTY BACKGROUND, WHO APPEARS NOT VERY FAMILIAR WITH U.S. EDUCATIONAL SCENE BUT OPEN TO NEW IDEAS WHICH WOULD BENEFIT SOVIET EDUCATION. DEPUTY MINISTER SOFINSKIY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS CHIEF BAZHANOV WERE PRESENT ON SOVIET SIDE, AND CAO NOAH ON AMERICAN.

2. I PRESENTED SECRETARY WEINBERGER'S LETTER, STATING OUR DESIRE TO WELCOME MINISTER YELUTIN TO U.S. AND OUR READINESS TO DISCUSS DETAILS AT WORKING LEVEL. YELUTIN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON EARLIER VISIT OF SECRETARY TO MOSCOW. HE DID MENTION LIGHTLY THAT SECRETARY'S TRIP HAD BEEN PRIMARILY ON HEALTH MATTERS AND THAT HIS CONTACT WITH EDUCATION MATTERS HAD BEEN BRIEF. FURTHER REFERENCE TO HIS BEING ACCUSTOMED TO PLAYING HOST HERE BUT NOT TO BEING HOSTED SUGGESTED HE MAY BE SENSITIVE TO LEVEL AT WHICH HE WILL BE RECEIVED IN WASHINGTON AND EMPHASIZES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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USEFULNESS OF CAREFUL PREPARATION FOR VISIT. IN POSITIVE MANNER,

MINISTER SAID HE WOULD HAVE BETTER IDEA OF HIS PLANS CLOSER TO SPRING, AND I SAID OUR PEOPLE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIS.

3. IN GENERAL REVIEW OF EXPANDING CONTACTS, I TOOK NOTE OF PROGRESS IN SEVERAL FIELDS. ALTHOUGH ARCHIVAL ACCESS FOR AMERICAN GRADUATE STUDENTS HAS BEEN AND REMAINS TO SOME EXTENT A PROBLEM, I OBSERVED THAT IT HAS IMPROVED RECENTLY WITH ACTIVE HELP OF MINISTRY. BOTH SIDES EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION WITH DEVELOPMENT OF NEW LECTURER EXCHANGE. I REMARKED THAT TIMELY PROVISION OF INFORMATION FROM SOVIET UNIVERSITIES ON FIELDS FOR AMERICAN CANDIDATES REMAINS A PROBLEM. I STRESSED THE USEFULNESS OF CONTINUING CIEE LENINGRAD SEMESTER PROGRAM AND DESIRABILITY OF FACILITATING MAXIMUM CONTACT BETWEEN STUDENTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN NATURAL CONTEXT. I SAID THIS APPLIED TO NEW SUNY EXCHANGE AS WELL, WHERE DORMITORY HUSING IS PREFERABLE TO HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS GIVEN TO INITIAL GROUP. WE REMARKED ON SUCESS OF SUNY FIRST EXCHANGE, WHICH CONCLUDES THIS WEEK.

4. ASKED TO COMMENT ON TRENDS IN SOVIET HIGHER EDUCATION, YELUTIN OUTLINED SEVERAL CURRENT CONCERNS WHICH HE SAID WOULD GOVERN PLANNING THROUGH THE YEAR 2000. UPGRADING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING PROCESS AND MATCHING EDUCATION TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF SOCIETY AND INDUSTRY ARE MAJOR ISSUES. THEY NOW CONCERNED WITH HOW TO KEEP UP WITH RAPID CHANGES OF TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION, AND AT SAME TIME HOW TO DEVELOP IN STUDENTS A GOOD EDUCATIONAL BASE, EMPHASIZING FUNDAMENTALS SO THEY CAN BETTER ABSORB TECHNICAL INNOVATION. THE OVERALL THRUST WILL BE TOWARD A BROADER EDUCATION AND AWAY FROM NARROWLY RESTRICTED SPECIALIZATION. THEY WISH TO STRESS CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PERSON'S ENTIRE CAREER, PROVIDING A WAY TO UPGRADE SKILLS AT EACH STAGE IN EDUCATION AND CAREER.

5. YELUTIN SAID THAT BROADNESS OF TODAY'S TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION IS CURRENT ISSUE: HOW TO FIND AND USE RELEVANT INFORMATION; THE METHODOLOGY OF FINDING THE RIGHT QUESTION AND ORGANIZING MATERIAL TO PROVIDE ANSWER.

6. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS INTENSIFICATION OF METHOD OF EDUCATION AND RELATING IT TO INDUSTRY. MINISTRY ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN COMPUTERS, FILM, TV, OTHER TECHNICAL AIDS TO EDUCATION
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WHICH CAN IMPROVE THE ACTUAL TEACHING IMPACT.

7. MINISTRY ALSO CONSIDERING QUESTION OF HOW TO EVALUATE SUCCESS OF EDUCATION AND OF INSTRUCTORS; HOW BETTER TO ORGANIZE METHODS OF TEACHING FOR THE GREATEST RESULT; PROPER MIX OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, WORK AT HOME, OTHER METHODS.

8. MINISTER SAID EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, TO FACE PROBLEMS OF TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION, MUST MAKE STUDENTS THINK FOR THEMSELVES TO SOLVE TASKS.

9. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, YELUTIN SAID MINISTRY NOT CONTENT WITH QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES AND TRYING TO RAISE IT, ALTHOUGH HE ANTICIPATED NUMBER AND SIZE OF INSTITUTES WOULD NOT CHANGE APPRECIABLY. MINISTRY IS ALSO CONCERNED WITH PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPLETION OF EDUCATION, E.G., THROUGH EVENING SCHOOLS CONNECTED WITH UNIVERSITY, FOR THOSE WHO COULD NOT COMPLETE DEGREES.

10 AT CONCLUSION I EXPRESSED HOPE FOR CONTINUED EXPANSION OF OUR EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS TO PROMOTE MUTUAL GOALS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

1. COMMENT: I FOUND YELUTIN AN INTERESTING INTERLOCUTOR WHOSE IDEAS OF FUTURE TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ARE APPARENTLY FAIRLY MODERN. IF PUT INTO PRACTICE, THEY SHOULD WORK TO COUNTER THE PROBLEM OF NARROWLY-BASED SPECIALIZATION WHICH HAS BEEN A WEAKNESS OF SOVIET EDUCATION IN THE PAST. FIELDS HE OUTLINED SHOULD PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF FRUITFUL U.S.-SOVIET COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

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